

Message Text

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ACTION SMI-01

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FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: OSCI, TBIO, TS

SUBJ:SMITHSONIAN/SFCP--ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FOR
SMITHSONIAN GRANTEES

REFS: STATE 280470; TUNIS 7920

1. EMBASSY HAS DISCUSSED POSSIBLE TRANSFER OF GENERALIZED ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FUNCTIONS OF MMSC TO DR. NOVIKOFF'S DESERT RESEARCH PROJECT PER REFTELS WITH NOVIKOFF AND MENEZ OF MMSC. THEY OUTLINED SERVICES PROVIDED TO ALL SMI PROJECTS BY MMSC AND ADVANTAGES OF CONTINUING THESE FUNCTIONS SEPARATE FROM EMBASSY UNDER AUSPICES OF DESERT PROJECT. NOVIKOFF FORESEES NO GREAT DIFFICULTY IN UNDERTAKING SUPERVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT GROUP AS PART OF HIS PROJECT AFTER TERMINATION OF SMI ROLE IN MMSC. HE FEELS HE HAS CONSIDERABLE FREE REIN BECAUSE OF HIS CLOSE PERSONAL RELATIONS WITH HIS TUNISIAN COLLABORATOR. NOVIKOFF HAS INFORMALLY DISCUSSED IDEA WITH HIS COLLABORATOR AND OTHER SENIOR OFFICIALS AND BEEN TOLD THEY HAVE NO OBJECTIONS, INCLUDING SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS FOR IMPORT OF EQUIPMENT FOR ALL SMI PROJECTS. FACT THAT INDIVIDUAL SMI PROJECTS CONTAIN FUNDS TO FINANCE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SHOULD HELP DISPEL POSSIBLE QUESTIONS BY GOT OR OTHER FUNDING AGENCIES HOW SMI CAN CONTINUE PROVIDE SUCH SUPPORT THROUGH ANOTHER PROJECT AFTER MMSC TERMINATION.

2. EMBASSY REMAINS WILLING TO UNDERTAKE MANY OF THESE FUNCTIONS IF SMI DECIDES THAT MAINTENANCE OF ADMINISTRATIVE
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TIVE SUPPORT GROUP IS TOO COSTLY IN PERIOD OF GREATLY

REDUCED FUNDING FOR SFCP'S. SOME FUNCTIONS,SUCH AS
TRAVEL, WERE HANDLED BY EMBASSY FOR SMI AS IN CASE OF
OTHER SFCP'S UNTIL FAIRLY RECENTLY. WE HAVE, HOWEVER,
NO OBJECTION TO PROPOSED TRANSFER IF SMI SO WISHES,
ALTHOUGH WE WOULD RECOMMEND THAT INASMUCH AS WE AND
SMI HAVE GONE TO CONSIDERABLE LENGTHS TO EXPLAIN CLOSURE
OF MMSC IN TERMS OF FINANCIAL STRINGENCIES, ANY GRANTEE
CENTER BE KEPT AS SMALL AS POSSIBLE CONSONANT WITH JOB
TO BE DONE, IN TERMS BOTH SPACE AND PERSONNEL.
SEELYE

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